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Identical letters dated 28 January 2015 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to attach herewith identical letters dated 27 January 2015 addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council regarding the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014) (S/2015/48).

It would be highly appreciated if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Haydar **Ali Ahmad**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the identical letters dated 28 January 2015 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

[Original: Arabic]

On instructions from my Government, I should like to convey to you the position of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic regarding the eleventh report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014) (S/2015/48):

1. Since 2011, the Syrian Government has marshalled all national resources to meet the essential needs for shelter, food and medicine of all civilians who have been affected by the crimes of armed terrorist groups. It has done so in accordance with its constitutional responsibilities towards its citizens and in keeping with its consistent position that the humanitarian situation and its implications are matters of priority.

2. The Syrian Government reaffirms its desire to continue cooperating with the United Nations to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance to all affected Syrian citizens, without discrimination. Accordingly, on 17 December 2014, after holding consultations and reaching agreement with the United Nations, the Government approved the 2015 Syria response plan. That plan complements national efforts that were launched at the start of the crisis to mitigate the suffering of Syrian civilians caused by ongoing terrorist acts and attacks, as well as by destructive foreign interference in Syrian internal affairs. The plan furthermore ensures that United Nations humanitarian agencies will be able to continue operating and support the resilience of Syrian civilians.

3. Syria is disappointed that the report's authors continue to adopt a negative approach to the humanitarian situation in Syria. They furthermore insist on politicizing that issue and ignore the facts and developments on the ground. The authors have used the same stereotypical language, which is aimed at blaming the Syrian Government for the deterioration of the humanitarian situation and for impeding the delivery of assistance. They have inflated the numbers of displaced persons and relied on sources of information that, at very least, can be said to lack credibility. At the same time, the authors deliberately ignore the fact that the humanitarian crisis that has arisen in certain parts of Syria was caused and exacerbated by the acts of terrorism that armed terrorist groups have committed against the people and Government of Syria. On 25 January 2015, armed terrorist groups that are backed by France and Saudi Arabia, in particular, openly and deliberately shelled buildings and property in Damascus. That attack was a vivid example of the barbarity of the acts of terrorism that armed terrorist groups regularly commit against civilians. Those groups fired forty 107 mm calibre rockets and mortar shells at residential neighbourhoods in Damascus, killing six civilians and injuring 53 others, some of whom were children. Civilians also suffered material losses in that attack. In addition, armed terrorist groups struck Aleppo and Ladhiqiyah, killing many persons in both cities.

4. The report's authors continue to describe armed terrorist groups as "the armed opposition", "non-State armed groups" or "armed groups". Syria deplores and rejects those descriptions, which are contrary to what is stated in paragraph 10 of

the report. In that paragraph, it is stated that Ahrar al-Sham and Army of Islam have concluded an agreement with the Nusrah Front, a group that, according to the report itself, is on the list of terrorist organizations maintained by the Security Council. In paragraph 49 of the report, the Secretariat describes the persons who stole a vehicle belonging to the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, packed it with explosives and detonated it in Dar'a city as "non-State armed groups". Such a description is absurd, particularly given that the Security Council itself has described those groups as being terrorist groups.

5. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms that, regardless of whether some parties acknowledge this, the United Nations would not be able to deliver humanitarian assistance or provide relief were it not for the efforts of the Government, its cooperation and direct coordination with the specialized organizations and agencies of the United Nations, and the protection it provides to the Organization's personnel and convoys. The numbers are the clearest indicator of the humanitarian work that had been done in Syria. For example, in December 2014, according to United Nations organizations, food assistance was delivered from within Syrian territory to 3.6 million beneficiaries and medical assistance to 500,000 persons. The facts on the ground and the figures in the report demonstrate the lack of effectiveness and utility of delivering assistance across the borders in achieving the humanitarian objectives that Security Council resolutions 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014) are purported to promote. That is evidenced by the fact that assistance was not delivered across the borders to the hardest-hit areas of Raqqah and Dayr al-Zawr. The United Nations instead focused on delivering assistance to other areas in Idlib, Dar'a and Aleppo, although it was possible to reach those areas from inside Syrian territory, and that is what indeed happened in many instances. The United Nations must therefore focus on delivering various forms of humanitarian assistance and relief from inside Syrian territory, in complete cooperation and coordination with the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic.

6. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms that the humanitarian situation in Syria cannot improve unless priority is given to the following:

- Serious efforts must be made to address the primary cause of the humanitarian crisis that has developed in many parts of Syria, namely, the crimes that have been committed from the outset of the Syrian crisis by armed terrorist groups that enjoy support at the regional and international levels. Those groups, including some that are affiliated with Al-Qaida, have attacked cities, villages and other populated areas, siphoned off the country's resources, systematically destroyed infrastructure and forcibly displaced peaceful civilians, depriving them of their livelihoods and security.
- It is important, indeed, necessary, that the Secretariat's policies should accord with the Charter of the United Nations, United Nations resolutions, the provisions governing humanitarian work, General Assembly resolution 46/182 and Security Council resolutions 2170 (2014) and 2178 (2014), which affirmed the need to prioritize countering terrorism and terrorist organizations, such as Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and the Nusrah Front and organizations affiliated with them. In order to end the humanitarian crisis in Syria, there must be complete cooperation and coordination with the Syrian Government with regard to counter-terrorism. Support for and funding and encouragement of terrorism must be halted, and the financing of terrorism

must be suppressed. The cross-border flow of foreign terrorists into Syria must also be halted, in accordance with Security Council resolutions.

- With regard to the delivery of assistance to affected persons inside Syrian territory, the United Nations must strengthen its cooperation and coordination with the Syrian Government pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/182, in order to ensure that such assistance is effective and reaches its rightful recipients, not armed terrorist groups, as had happened previously. Syria emphasizes that the ability of the United Nations and its humanitarian agencies to carry out successfully their relief work in Syrian territory requires complete cooperation and coordination with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, the Organization's primary partner for such work throughout Syria.

- The problem of the funding shortfall, which was one of the main obstacles to the implementation of the 2014 humanitarian response plan, must be addressed. As of November 2014, only 39 per cent of the funding required for the plan had been secured, although many conferences had been convened for that purpose. Unfortunately, those conferences only produced verbal pledges, the majority of which have gone unfulfilled. The funding shortfall has caused the World Food Programme to decrease for a second time the size of the food parcel it provides. It has also caused a decline in the quality of the parcel's contents, in some instances. Those developments have had an adverse effect on the humanitarian response effort. In that connection, it should be noted that the Syrian Government strives earnestly and assiduously to meet the needs of its citizens and bears most of the burden of the humanitarian response effort in Syria. For example, in 2014, the Syrian Government continued to provide all types of aid to Palestine refugees residing in Syria. The aid provided amounted to $225 million.

- It is necessary to end the coercive and illegal unilateral measures taken by certain countries against Syria. Those measures have had a direct impact on the standard of living of Syrian civilians and have affected many vital sectors, such as medicine, water and sanitation. The Syrian Government recalls once again that the most recent report of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs indicates that those measures have worsened the living conditions of Syrian civilians.

- The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs must provide detailed tables of the supplies and assistance being brought across the border into various parts of Syria, because, in fact, what the Office provides is a notice containing only general information and fails to identify the parties to which it delivered materials for distribution. The Office also fails to specify the criteria used to assess needs in areas where it has been proposed that aid should be distributed or the numbers of beneficiaries and the distribution mechanism employed.

- In its reports, the Secretariat must be forthright and demonstrate transparency when addressing the question of the effectiveness of the mechanism for monitoring cross-border assistance. The facts on the ground have demonstrated that the United Nations does not have an effective mechanism for verifying that humanitarian assistance reaches the intended beneficiaries in areas in which armed terrorist groups are present. That is because the United Nations is unable to enter those areas and must make do with monitoring the arrival of shipments at border points from the other side of the border. Those shipments

are then turned over to parties whose identities and affiliations are unknown. Such conduct is not consistent with Security Council resolutions. Numerous foreign reports have also indicated that non-governmental or local organizations charged with distributing aid have paid bribes, under the guise of transportation costs, to so-called ISIL emirs. ISIL then seizes the aid and either sells it or distributes it to its members and supporters. In so doing, those organizations are contravening the letter and spirit of Security Council resolution 2165 (2014) and the resolutions of the Council concerning counter-terrorism, including resolutions 2133 (2014), 2170 (2014) and 2178 (2014), which prohibit funding and supporting armed terrorist groups such as ISIL, the Nusrah Front and Al-Qaida, and armed terrorist groups affiliated with them.

- The Secretariat must refrain from attempting to give a veneer of legitimacy to the illegal work of non-governmental organizations that are operating in certain border areas in the north and, in particular, the south of the country. That approach sets a dangerous precedent with negative implications for the credibility of humanitarian work carried out under the aegis of the United Nations.

- Turkey must stop using non-official border crossings to bring weapons and instruments of death into Syria and to smuggle terrorists into the country. Saudi Arabia must stop using the border crossings used by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to bring in weapons and aid destined for the Nusrah Front and other terrorist groups. The United Nations has a moral and political responsibility to prevent that from happening.

- United Nations officials must stop making statements and issuing reports that, for political motives, contain misleading and arbitrary estimates, and inaccurate and undocumented figures on humanitarian needs in Syria. Such conduct adversely affects the credibility and precision of humanitarian work, including the report under discussion. The report cites unreliable testimony and reports coming from parties hostile to Syria, including, the reports of the international commission of inquiry for Syria, which are characterized by politicization, lack of objectivity, hostility and reliance on information provided by armed terrorist groups.

7. Despite the politicization of the humanitarian effort and the insistence of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs on pursuing a course of action that is contrary to its responsibilities, the Syrian Government, in cooperation with Syrian Arab Red Crescent, continues to facilitate the efforts of the United Nations and other international organizations to reach many hard-to-reach areas, including hotspots in Rif Dimashq, Homs, Aleppo, Idlib and Raqqah governorates. This is in addition to the assistance being delivered by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent to hotspots. Enclosure 2 lists examples of humanitarian assistance that was delivered to several hard-to-reach areas, including hotspots in Rif Dimashq, Homs, Aleppo, Idlib and Raqqah governorates. That assistance was delivered thanks to the facilitation provided by the Syrian Government to the United Nations and international organizations, in cooperation with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent. This is in addition to the assistance offered and being delivered by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent to ordinary areas and hotspots.

8. The Syrian Government finds it regrettable that, for political reasons that are now clear, the report's authors persist in claiming that the Government is besieging

given areas in certain parts of the country and denying access to humanitarian assistance. That is untrue. For instance, Yarmouk camp is besieged from within by the armed terrorist groups. Those groups are the ones that prevent humanitarian workers from accessing aid distribution points and open fire on civilians and rescue teams. The report itself acknowledges that point by referring to volunteers who were killed by armed groups.

9. The same applies to the villages in the eastern Ghutah. The armed terrorist groups are preventing civilians from leaving those areas, and are using them as human shields while appropriating the humanitarian assistance that they receive. The Syrian Government has made every possible effort to evacuate civilians from those areas. 3,000 civilians, mostly women and children, were recently rescued from the eastern Ghutah, including Duma. They were fleeing the savage treatment meted out by the armed terrorist groups. They sought refuge with the Government, which has welcomed them and provided the assistance, basic services and medical care that they need.

10. The Syrian Government has warned the United Nations side that certain foreign parties have been using Security Council resolution 2165 (2014) and the delivery of assistance as a pretext to support the armed terrorist groups, using the same crossings and roads as United Nations actors. Such actions genuinely endanger humanitarian work and United Nations agencies in Syria. In order to protect humanitarian workers, Syria has therefore asked the Resident Coordinator to provide it with a list of United Nations partners in the context of implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions. We are still awaiting a response.

11. The Syrian Government holds the United Nations side responsible for any negative impact on the agricultural sector, the environment and the biosphere that may be caused by the illegal introduction since the adoption of Security Council resolution 2165 (2014) of agricultural or animal produce. The United Nations Resident Coordinator in Syria has been informed that certain genetically modified agricultural substances and seeds have been found in Aleppo and Idlib governorates. They originated in the Israeli entity and had been shipped to Turkey, where they were repackaged as Turkish produce.

12. Regrettably, the authors have failed to point out that the so-called international coalition has directly targeted Syria's petroleum and gas infrastructure with the pretext of combating the terrorists of ISIL, their bases and facilities and the petroleum thieves with whom they work. Those actions constitute a significant threat to the infrastructure and cause considerable material and environmental degradation. There are also reports that the strikes of the so-called coalition have claimed civilian casualties, including children. The Syrian Government wonders why the infrastructure is being attacked, who is responsible for the financial losses, and what will be the environmental impact of the systematic destruction wrought by the so-called coalition. Moreover, we have yet to hear any comments on the part of the United Nations regarding Turkey's indulgence of the systematic smuggling of stolen Syrian and Iraqi petroleum across its territory to global markets. The so-called coalition has done nothing to attack the mercenaries or the petroleum smugglers and their means of transport, despite being fully aware that petroleum is being stolen and sold via Turkish territory, whether for local use in Turkey or for global markets.

13. Syria is surprised that the authors have deliberately refrained from referring to reports that civilians, including children, have died in the so-called coalition's strikes on Syrian territory, which have taken place with the pretext of combating the terrorist organization ISIL. The very same report cites various unidentified parties to support allegations of human rights violations.

14. The Syrian Government rejects the claims made in the Secretary-General's report that the Syrian armed forces are indiscriminately targeting civilians. The Syrian Arab Army is carrying out its constitutional and moral duty to protect Syrian citizens from armed terrorist groups and prevent the latter from committing crimes against Syrians in their homes, schools, universities, hospitals, mosques, churches and workplaces. Those crimes have also affected humanitarian assistance convoys. It is particularly telling that the people who have been forcibly displaced from their homes head for areas that are protected by the Syrian Arab Army. At the same time, the Syrian Government is earnestly striving to reach a political solution and bring about national reconciliation, which is Syria's national strategy. At the Geneva conference, Syria emphasized the importance of prioritizing counter-terrorism and bringing about national reconciliation, with a view to arriving at a political solution among Syrians and under Syrian leadership.

15. Syria has declared its readiness to cooperate at the international and regional level in countering terrorism through an international or regional alliance that would be established under the auspices of the United Nations. It is also prepared to engage in bilateral cooperation to that end and supports any international effort aimed at countering terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, provided that, in doing so, every effort is made to safeguard civilian lives, respect national sovereignty and adhere to international instruments. Syria has repeatedly stressed that States that sponsor terrorism in Syria should learn from previous events and experiences. They should understand that the threat engendered by terrorism will engulf Syria and all world States. It will reach every country in the world, particularly those that embrace, support and fund terrorism. The recent acts of terrorism in France and elsewhere confirm the soundness of Syria's position.

16. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms its position that the crisis in Syria requires a peaceful, political solution based on dialogue among Syrians under Syrian leadership. It calls on the international community to support those efforts, and calls on State sponsors of terrorism and armed terrorist groups, particularly Saudi Arabia and France, immediately to stop supporting, funding, training and harbouring such groups. The terrorists are not a danger to Syria alone: their blind rage will spread like wildfire across the world.

(*Signed*) Haydar **Ali Ahmad**
Counsellor
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

Enclosure 1

Crimes committed recently by armed terrorist groups

- On 27 December 2014, armed terrorist groups launched shells that landed near the Ghassaniyah school in Aleppo city, killing four civilians and wounding others.
- On 27 December 2014, terrorists launched three shells towards Damascus. The shells landed near the Abbasiyyin hospital in the Bab Tuma area. One man and one woman were wounded by shrapnel, and damage was caused to residential and commercial buildings and to several cars.
- On 28 December 2014, the armed terrorist groups launched a shell that landed on the home of Ali Halimah in the village of Kufayr Yabus, in Rif Dimashq governorate, killing an eight year-old girl.
- On 30 December 2014, the armed terrorist groups launched mortar shells that landed near the Fursan Hotel in Faris al-Khuri street, near the German Embassy, in Damascus.
- On 30 December 2014, the armed terrorist groups entered and detonated the branch office of the Ministry of Transport in the town of Kiswah.
- On 30 December 2014, terrorist snipers shot at civilians cars on the Damascus-Suwayda' highway, hitting one woman.
- On 31 December 2014, an armed terrorist group in the village of Tafas, in Dar'a governorate, shot and killed Muhammad al-Rumaylawi, a member of the village reconciliation committee.
- On 2 January 2015, a mass grave was found in the village of Bahrah, district of Albu Kamal, governorate of Dayr al-Zawr. The bodies are believed to belong to members of the Shu'aytat clan who were killed by the terrorist group ISIL.
- On 7 January 2015, the armed terrorist groups detonated the Rawi mosque in the Shaykh Yasin quarter in the city of Dayr al-Zawr.
- On 8 January 2015, the armed terrorist groups burned down the home of Muhammad al-'Umari, a member of the Yarmouk camp reconciliation committee, on Safad Street in the camp.
- On 8 January 2015, in the village of Bughayliyah, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called ISIL organization opened fire on a bus transporting students from the private Aljazeera University. One student was killed and another wounded.
- On 8 January 2015, the terrorist groups detonated an explosive device opposite the petrol station in Zaghlulah, causing material damage.
- On 9 January 2015, the armed terrorist groups launched a mortar shell that landed in the village of Mastumah, Idlib governorate. Two people were killed and a third was hit by shrapnel. The area also sustained material damage.
- On 13 January 2015, the armed terrorist groups launched a mortar shell that landed near the Ghassan Abbud school in the Adawi area of Damascus. A girl was hit by shrapnel.

- On 21 January 2015, a terrorist group detonated a car bomb on Hadarah street in the Ikrimah quarter of Homs city, killing five civilians and injuring 35 others, including children.

Enclosure 2

Examples of humanitarian assistance that the United Nations and international organizations, acting in cooperation with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, were able to deliver thanks to the facilitation of the Syrian Government, and assistance that was provided by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent

- In November and December 2014, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) delivered food parcels and other forms of assistance to approximately 1.2 million persons, an average of 600,000 beneficiaries per month. Working in cooperation with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, it also delivered medical items, water purification supplies and other relief supplies to a greater number of civilians than it had been able to in the past, including persons in hard-to-reach areas in Aleppo, Rif Dimashq, Dar'a, Qunaytirah, Suwayda', Hamah, Tartus, Ladhiqiyah, Homs (Wa'r area) and the Homs countryside (Rastan and Tallbisah), as well as to some 50,000 displaced persons in the Idlib countryside (Khan Shaykhun, Ma'arrat Nu'man, Salqin, Kafr Takharim and Sarmada) and another 25,000 beneficiaries in Idlib city. In December, the Syrian Government approved four requests from the ICRC mission to use the Nusaybin border crossing to bring humanitarian assistance (80,000 food parcels) into Hasakah governorate.

- On 16 December 2014, the United Nations, in cooperation with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, sent a convoy carrying humanitarian aid to Tallbisah and Mashrafah in the Homs countryside. The convoy also delivered 9,000 food parcels and 8,950 school bags to Tallbisah and 1,000 food parcels and high-energy foodstuffs to Mashrafah.

- At the end of November and in December, the United Nations, in cooperation with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, sent a convoy carrying humanitarian aid to Madaya and Harasta.

- The Syrian Arab Red Crescent, in cooperation with ICRC and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), was able to meet the urgent needs of approximately 1,500 Syrians who had been taken out of the Duma area, which is under the control of armed terrorist groups.

- Responding to humanitarian needs in the Yalda area of Rif Dimashq, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent provided 1,000 food parcels to affected families as part of the national reconciliation effort.

- In December, some 2,500 food parcels and health packages were delivered to the Yarmouk camp. Medical assistance, medicines and vaccines were also delivered, despite some interruptions caused by sniper and gun fire by armed terrorist groups. In 2014, the General Administration for Palestine Arab Refugees, working in cooperation with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and with the facilitation and complete support of Syrian Government, delivered 56,008 food parcels and 11,618 health packages to civilians inside the Yarmouk camp.

- In December, gun and sniper fire by the armed terrorist groups besieging the Yarmouk camp continued to make it impossible to bring humanitarian aid to the civilians inside the camp. The terrorists killed several civilians who were attempting to deliver that aid. The deputy representative of UNRWA, the

representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization and others witnessed those crimes being committed. In that connection, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic is surprised that United Nations Secretariat officials did not condemn that incident, although it is stated in the report that volunteers had been killed by "armed groups".

- In December 2014, the World Food Programme (WFP) distributed food aid to some 3.6 million persons.

- In December 2014, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent distributed humanitarian aid provided by United Nations organizations and non-governmental organizations operating in Syria. More than 353,521 food parcels provided by WFP were distributed in most Syrian governorates, including Raqqah (5,450 parcels), Dar'a (30,414 parcels) and Aleppo (86,596 parcels).

- In December, WFP was able to meet the needs of 227,000 persons in Hasakah governorate by distributing food parcels, while the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) was able to meet the needs of 100,000 persons, half of whom were children, in Hasakah governorate by distributing food, health-care and educational items, water and health-care packages.

- The World Health Organization (WHO) delivered medical assistance to approximately 500,000 persons, including to persons located in areas designated as hard-to-reach or hotspots in Rif Dimashq (Duma) and Homs and its countryside.

- From 24 November to 23 December 2014, the Ministry of Health, in cooperation with WHO, UNICEF, ICRC, UNRWA, the United Nations Population Fund and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent delivered 231 medical shipments to the majority of Syrian governorates, including hard-to-reach areas in Rif Dimashq, the Idlib countryside and Idlib city.

- In 2014, UNHCR distributed basic relief supplies (non-food) to more than 4.3 million persons.

- In December 2014, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent delivered food and non-food assistance to several hard-to-reach areas in Idlib governorate and its countryside, Qurqina and its countryside, Abu al-Dhuhur and its countryside, Ma'arrah and its countryside, Sarmada, Ma'arrat Misrin, Fu'ah, Binnish, Tu'um, Shalakh, Katban and Ma'arrah). The assistance delivered included 6,500 food parcels.

- We reiterate that the experience of the United Nations in transporting humanitarian assistance to Mu'addamiyah and what the Organization witnessed inside the city confirm that it is not under siege, and that the 4,000 civilians remaining in the Darayya area have been able to reach Mu'addamiyah. That is contrary to what the Secretariat's reports insist on alleging about Mu'addamiyah and Darayya, including the report under consideration, something that casts doubt on its credibility.

- The Syrian Government renewed its approval for WFP to bring humanitarian assistance through the Nusaybin crossing on the Syrian-Turkish border, in order to allow 46,000 food parcels to be brought into Hasakah governorate in December 2014 and January 2015. It also once again allowed the Nusaybin crossing to be used to bring in 105 metric tons of fortified biscuits for distribution to schoolchildren in the governorate. The Government is currently considering extending that authorization to include February.